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## THE MODERN MANTELPIECE.

A NEW AND ARTISTIC FEATURE IN HOME DECORATION.



THE fogs and chilly atmosphere that have already heralded the approach of winter, and the boding storms and dismal weather that are assuredly in store for us, seem to divert our thoughts to that never-failing centre of warmth and comfort—the fireplace. From time immemorial the domestic hearth has been the theme of optimists and poets, who have lavished on it the most endearing epithets, and have associated it with their most delightful fancies.

The fireplace has always been, and always will be, the happiest rallying-place of the family, and the one important centre of homely joy and council. And to this day it still retains a lingering tincture of its original sanctity, when the hearth was the tribal altar, and the philosophy of the age taught *corpus est terra, anima est ignis*.

The fireplace has been aptly called “the sun in the house,” and has often been criticised as wasteful and extravagant by those who advocate the use of enclosed fires; the question of economy is the one and only advantage of such means of heating. The hot air and water-pipes are most oppressive in their effect, and it



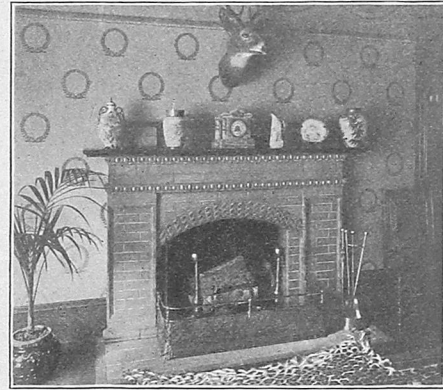
DIGNIFIED AND HOSPITABLE. MANTEL DESIGNED AND MANUFACTURED BY THE PHILADELPHIA AND BOSTON FACE BRICK CO.

takes weeks before one can accustom themselves to the stuffiness of the warm, confined atmosphere of a New York flat.

The large enclosed stoves, on the other hand, are equally objectionable, for they always seem to subject the patient to a sort of “dry roast,” which is far from comfortable. Who ever saw a jolly party circled round a closed-in fire or nestling gracefully round a coil of hot-water pipes? There is something ludicrous in the very idea. The ruddy glow and sociable warmth of the open fireplace has too strong a hold, both for its social and cheering, as well as æsthetic qualities, to allow it to decline, among an æsthetic and comfort-loving people.

From the fireplace to the mantelpiece is but the turn of the hand. The development of æsthetic art during the past few years has materially influenced home decorations, and the chimneypiece,—the central part of the decorative scheme,—has received much improving

thought and study—study not only for design alone, but as to material as well; and in these, as with other accessories of decorative art, the demand for novel and artistic effects is never-failing. Now that we have emancipated our ideas from the always insipid and oftentimes over-ornate marble mantelpiece, the opportunities for the designing and producing of art chimney-pieces are almost unlimited.



FOR PARLOR OR SITTING-ROOM. MANTEL DESIGNED AND MANUFACTURED BY THE PHILADELPHIA AND BOSTON FACE BRICK CO.

The gradual stages of progress that have marked the improvement in the designs of our modern mantelpieces have all been, in a great measure, the result of adapting forms and mouldings of an architectural character; the finest and most imposing examples of this class of work are invariably designed on classic lines.

But a few years ago the choice of the buyer was limited to marble or wood, with a predilection in favor of the latter material, perhaps, in the best examples, combined with stone, brick or tiles. But now a new material—or rather an old material put to new uses—is suing for popular favor, and the beautiful and artistic ornamental unglazed brick mantel is deserving of more than popular notice. These mantels are built up in an endless variety of happy combinations that can be made from the various shapes of bricks manufactured.

These bricks are pressed in moulds prepared from patterns of the most artistic Greek and Renaissance designs, and the effect when set in the mantels is that



A COMFORTABLE CORNER. MANTEL DESIGNED AND MANUFACTURED BY THE PHILADELPHIA AND BOSTON FACE BRICK CO.



of carved work. The joints between the courses of brick serve to break up any tendency to a heavy monumental effect, and the general appearance of the mantels is exceedingly soft, rich and harmonious.

As may be seen by the sketches shown herewith, the designs are the work of an experienced architect, who has made a study of the best brick-work of England and the Continent. These designs are adapted for use in any room where a fireplace mantel is desired. If one wishes the newest designs in the permanent furnishing of the home, they should certainly look further into the merits of the ornamental brick fireplace mantels before fully deciding. The designs are architectural, dignified and handsome; the bricks are made in six different colors, viz.: red, cream, buff, pink, brown and gray, thus securing a choice of coloring to harmonize or contrast perfectly with any scheme of surrounding decoration.

Size is no drawback to ordering, as the designs are adaptable to any regulation space and conditions. In comparing the prices with other kinds of mantels, if one bears in mind the additional expense of brick for side linings, back, etc., in the others, it will be found that these cost no more than the wooden ones, all things considered, and they are infinitely more satisfactory from an artistic and æsthetic standpoint.

The simplicity and modest elegance of these designs are their chief charm; there is no overpowering elaboration of detail to worry the eye; every line and detail is carefully studied in the simplest of them, and that they are an artistic and practical success is due, not only to good business push and management, but also to the fact that the æsthetic as well as the practical side has been carefully developed.

The evolution and progress of the mantelpiece is ever an interesting study. It plays such an important part in the natural beauty of the room, and is such a great factor in producing harmonious effects, that it fully deserves the attention that is being paid it. The public is always on the lookout for novelties, and when so important a feature in home decoration comes to the front, embodying, as it does, so many good, practical and artistic features as appear in this mantel, it unquestionably comes to stay.

We are indebted to the courtesy of the Philadelphia and Boston Face Brick Co., of Boston, Mass., for the designs and information contained in this article, which we feel sure will be of much interest to our readers.

## A CHRISTMAS DINING-ROOM.



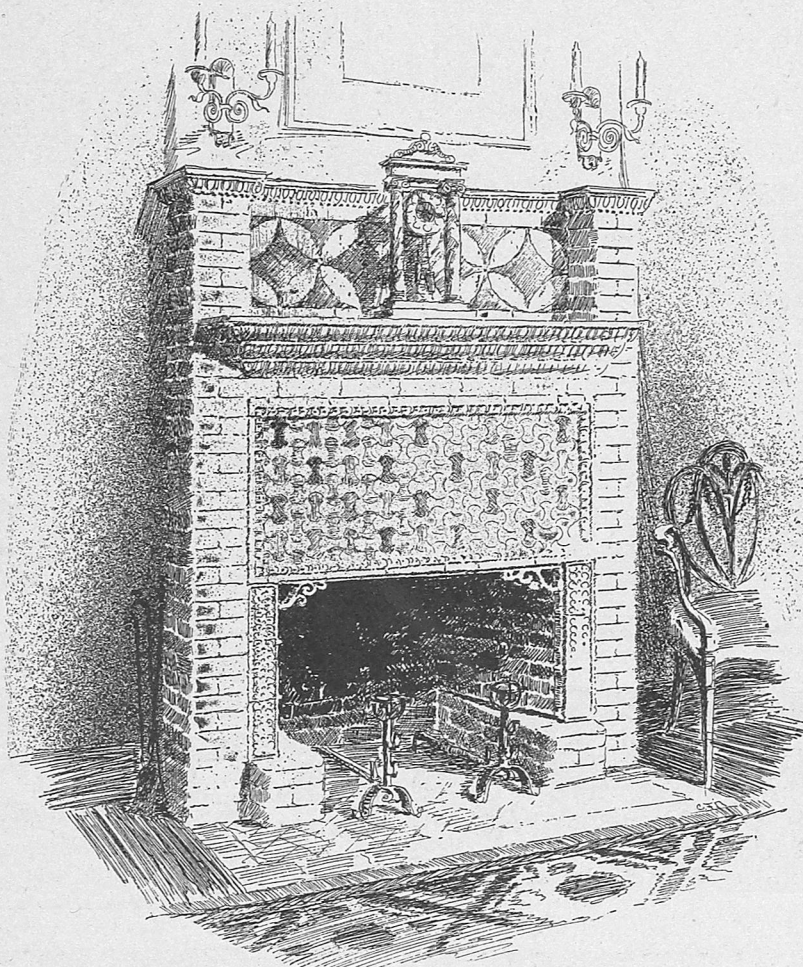
IS THERE a woman in this broad land of ours that does not wish to give an extra twist for Christmas day? With the thought of a good dinner comes the thought of a room well appointed, well dressed for the joyous time. It is her desire naturally to bring about a good ensemble, to make this particular place a home of beauty, to exercise her taste and to show to those invited that she is a woman of resource.

A noted society lady has already laid a plan which if well carried out will without doubt be a most charming affair. Her dining-room is of good size, quite square,

with ceiling of good height. She proposes to have over the picture-rail an evergreen known as the ground pine. This she will gracefully tack along the edge, and at intervals of artistic length will be hung big branches of holly and mistletoe, the combination of the red and gray being an excellent scheme. At each corner of the room will be a small cedar tree planted in a dark green stand. On all four trees will be the usual Christmas ornaments, gold tinsel, pop-corn, fruits, bonbons, not forgetting the general array of many-colored candles and the like. The table, which is a round one, will be covered by a snowy damask showing only a broad stripe with a heavy fringe. As a border, there will be twined about the edge garlands of evergreen studded with holly berries so as to enclose the space for each cover in a modified wreath. Beyond the edge of each of these will be placed a tiny bouquet-holder which contains an American Beauty rose of extra size.

As a centrepiece there will be a huge Jack Horner pie, entirely covered with evergreens and set in a mound of mistletoe and holly. The ribbons which decorate the pie will be of deep red holly tint and will bear the names of the guests in gold letters.

At the close of the dinner the ribbons which have served as guests' cards will be pulled simultaneously, and at a given signal each one will so procure the gift designed. With this table are side-trays, from which certain courses are to be served. If there are two waitresses they should wear caps decorated by streamers of red ribbons, and Swiss aprons trimmed with cherry bows.



HANDSOME ORNAMENTAL BRICK FIREPLACE MANTEL. DESIGNED AND  
MANUFACTURED BY THE PHILADELPHIA AND BOSTON  
FACE BRICK CO., OF BOSTON.